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ABSTRACT

Evaluation of the 1-year program for approximately 25 seriously emotionally disturbed older adolescents involved a review of the program design (objectives and organization), the planning process, interviews with staff, and analysis of data about student progress. Interviews were conducted with 11 staff members to elicit information on such topics as staff preparation and training, curriculum and instruction, and work experience for students. Among findings from interviews were that staff strongly supported the seven program objectives and identified four needs of students (such as a structured environment) and five additional objectives (such as survival skill development). Results indicated that teachers used the special education instructional materials center heavily to provide for individual student abilities; and that six students were successfully mainstreamed into the high school. Student data were gathered on enrollment, attendance, behavior levels, achievement, and placement. Among findings from student data were that attendance was variable, that the average student had achievement scores typical of fifth or sixth grade students, and that intervention of 1 or 2 years can be effective in preparing the students for regular school or work. (MC)

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EVALUATION OF THE SED PROGRAM FOR YOUNG ADULTS:

1980-81 SCHOOL YEAR

A SPECIAL STUDY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This summary highlights the conclusions reached in a study of the Adolescent Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Program during the 1980-81 school year.

Effective Program Features

- Student placements in regular schools or work programs for next year indicate effectiveness of program interventions for over half the students.
- Organizational structure of the program promotes changes in student behaviors and is strongly supported by staff.
- School code of behavior provides focus and concensus on program objectives and on procedures for dealing with students.
- On-site supervisor enables staff to work effectively in teaching and counselling without administrative distractions.
- Full-time counsellor available to students and faculty at all times.
- Staff is desirable size for group planning and for campus/student management and shows outstanding concern and support for the students in the program.

Areas for Program Improvement

- Facilitate increased student integration in regular school programs.
- Encourage more academic growth.
- Provide additional class offerings.
- Secure appropriate instructional materials, including textbooks.
- Develop new incentives for student change.
- Promote specific individual behavior control contracts.
- Provide cafeteria support staff.

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Exhibits were removed because of poor reproduction quality.

SAN JUAN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Research and Evaluation Department
Special Study in Special Education

Evaluation of the SED Program for Young Adults:

1980-81 School Year

PROGRAM DESIGN

Objectives of the SED Program

The objectives of the SED (Seriously Emotionally Disturbed) program in San Juan as set by program staff and described in the SED program guide are:

- Promote individual self-esteem
- Promote the development of self-discipline
- Provide a "secure and nurturing environment"
- Enhance learning through mutual self-respect
- Promote personal responsibility for following behavioral standards
- Establish reasonable rules for those in the school community
- Promote a return to the regular school program

Program Organization

The SED program is organized with clear statements of student privileges and responsibilities, and/or staff responsibilities. Depending upon the student behaviors exhibited in class and on the campus, as noted by the individual student, by other students and by the staff, the student is placed at one of four behavior management levels. These levels go from a self-contained classroom (with no interactions with other level students and no unstructured time), to a departmentalized program with varying degrees of unstructured time and privileges dependent upon the average number of points earned each week.

A number of school policies regarding bus behavior, classroom warnings, lunch room conduct, cutting, paraphernalia/dangerous items/toys, and use of the isolation room are included in the School Code of Behavior (Exhibit A).

PROGRAM PLANNING PROCESS

Staffing and Students

Prior to the 1980-81 school year the SED program was housed at two separate school sites. In 1980-81 all program classes were moved to a single school site. The early months of the school year were a time of transition, with teachers and

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This report was prepared by Nancy Enell, Research and Evaluation Department, in response to administrative staff requests made in March, 1981, for an impartial evaluation of the SED program.

students adjusting to a new setting. In addition to the move, there were a number of staff changes during the first three months and a change in the supervisor for the program.

Staff Conferences

In November, Jan Dahl, an Area Resource Teacher (ART), was assigned as program supervisor. She immediately scheduled individual staff conferences with each of the current staff members. These conferences included discussion of the positive issues of concern and suggestions for program improvement. The conferences covered six areas:

1. Record keeping
2. Behavior management system
3. Program
4. What are priorities for the Young Adult Center to address?
5. What do you see as my (the ART's) job responsibilities here.
6. What do you see as your job responsibility here?

Staff Planning

Following the individual staff conferences, staff planning took place during November and continued into December. This planning led to the development of the school code of behavior and to the overall program structure.

Staff Review

In May the process was repeated, with conferences held individually and findings shared with the total group. The most notable change over the five months was an increase in "positives" and a decrease in "concerns".

Reports on these staff conferences were prepared by Jan Dahl, ART, and are included in the Appendix as Exhibits I and J.

EVALUATION DESIGN

The evaluation plan had two components. One component was to gather information from all staff through interviews. These interviews were designed to provide information on the following topics:

1. Support for program objectives
2. Success of program organization
3. Staff responsibilities
4. Staff preparation and training for SED
5. Curriculum and instruction
6. Student behavior
7. Academic progress
8. Provision of counselling
9. Opportunities for mainstreaming
10. Work experience for students
11. Facility adaptation
12. Program and staff supervision

The second evaluation component was to collect student progress data. The data of interest included the following kinds of information:

- Number of students at each level each week (or some other period)
- Average enrollment, attendance and suspensions each week
- Student movement from January to May (other special education program, regular education, other educational program, drop, move)
- Achievement data from the WRAT

The evaluation design relied heavily on gathering information from only the 1980-81 school year because comparable information from previous years was not available.

IMPLEMENTATION FINDINGS -- INTERVIEWS

The following information summarizes the interview findings from eleven staff members on program implementation.

Support for Program Objectives

The objectives of the program as outlined in the first section were strongly supported by all staff members. The primary needs for students in the SED program were noted by staff to include (1) supplying students with a structured environment, (2) providing them with nurture, acceptance and love, (3) teaching students to exert self controls (to apply their own "brakes") and (4) to help students feel successful as individuals.

Additional objectives noted by staff members included (1) teaching students the basic skills they will require for survival in society, (2) keeping students in school (rather than dropping out), (3) providing students with the skills that will facilitate integration into the regular school program, (4) promoting social development and (5) providing the experiential background which is lacking in many of the SED students.

Success of Program Organization

Staff believed that the present organizational structure promoted self-responsibility and helped the student learn how to control their emotions. Several staff stressed the need to help students move toward regular school integration. The academic development of these students was seen as secondary to their behavioral development.

Staff Responsibilities

Teachers reported that the time spent in classroom instruction was less than half of their total work responsibility. All staff reported playing major roles in counselling individual students and in supplying campus supervision. Beginning in December, this campus supervision was assumed by all staff although that was not the case early in the school year. All staff reported that they understood and used specified procedures for dealing with student problems. The large staff allowed the supervision load and responsiblity to be shared by all staff members.

Staff meetings consumed a considerable amount of staff time. These meetings, however, were seen as essential in providing time for discussion of individual student problems, providing individual staff support, and allowing the staff time in which to plan together.

Teachers reported a minimum of contact with parents, explaining that the Area Resource Teacher was more likely to be in contact with parents regarding student problems. Some of the teaching staff made periodic phone calls to inform parents of positive behavioral growth.

Staff Preparation

All of the staff working with the SED program had some background and experience working with special education students. All teachers were appropriately credentialled by the State of California. The years of experience ranged from one to ten for the teachers and one to seven for the aides. Not all of the staff had specifically worked with or received training to deal with seriously emotionally disturbed students prior ro their involvement with the SED program in San Juan, but this was not seen as a problem by any of the staff.

Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum stress and instructional emphasis were on behavior, especially early in the year and during the transition. By spring more students were expressing interest in taking 'courses' and getting grades.

The students had a wide range of abilities from grade one through grade eleven. Appropriate materials for use with this ability range were frequently not known or were not available. The ART reported that the program/school had no budget for textbooks or instructional supplies. Teachers reported that the special education Instructional Materials Center (located at the facility) was greatly used.

Teachers reported that students frequently were given individual assignments. Single topic lessons were widely used by teachers because lesson continuity from day to day was difficult to establish because of sporadic student attendance (frequent time out for counselling, use of isolation room, and absences). Teachers reported that their time for instructional planning (daily lesson planning) was rather limited and was usually done at home.

Student Behavior

Two of the major student improvements noted by staff over the year were:

- Talking rather than reacting with overt behaviors.
- Ability to control voice rather than yelling.

Teachers found the contract point sheets a good method for tracking behaviors and showing growth. (Examples of the individual day-by-day point graphs are presented in Exhibits B and G.) Staff reported that the use of alternatives and a specified "bottom-line" helped in student discipline.

Staff noted the following problems related to controlling student behavior.

- Better classroom monitoring system needed than the negative check system.
- Need to develop target behaviors and then work on maintenance.

Incentives have greatly changed student behaviors and have come from all staff. They have included going out to lunch, field trips and getting a free haircut.

Academic Progress

Teachers reported that the Wide Range Achievement Test did not provide a comprehensive measure of student achievement and that few other measures were being used. Subject matter coverage, due to student changes in levels and lack of attendance, tended to be sporadic. Academic level grouping was difficult because of the class-levels structure based upon behavior and the range of student ability. One measure of academic progress was that one-third of the students passed competency tests. Class credits were linked to student behavior and completion of assignments, rather than to subject matter coverage.

Student Counselling

In addition to the full-time counsellor, teachers and aides played important roles in providing counselling. Because of the larger staff, someone was always available to counsel a student. When the counselor was the disciplinarian (as when no administrator was available early in the school year), it caused role confusion. Since December the counselor was available to help in staff morale as well as to counsel students. Students received both individual and group counselling from the on-site counselor and other staff.

Staff members expressed approval of the counselling provided for students, citing benefits such as a noticeable calming effect and student behavioral change following counselling sessions.

The role of the psychologists for the SED program was not visible/understood by staff. The psychologists reported using three-fourths of their time for student assessment, IEP meetings, crisis intervension and parent contacts and one-fourth in student/staff consultation. Assigning two psychologists, each on a limited basis, was thought to increase staff uncertainty about the psychologists' role.

Mainstreaming Opportunities

A total of six students (23 percent) were successfully placed part-time (one student) or full time (five students) on high school campuses during the 1980-81 school year. Teachers reported that those students who were placed in continuation schools seemed to be more successful, possibly because these schools were smaller, and the teachers were more understanding of students with problems. Two students who were placed in other schools had difficulties causing them to either return or drop out.

Some of the problems reported in attempting mainstreaming were arranging transportation, the time required for students to get back and forth, and staff ability to deal with many schools and teachers which required knowledge of school sites and receptive teachers.

Mainstreaming placements were found to be an incentive for some students to improve their behavior. According to teachers some students, however, did not want to be mainstreamed because of the problems they would face.

Work Experience

Four students were able to get "inside work experience" as aides for the adult education retarded program. At least ten students (38 percent) were able to have on campus work experience as aides in the Kenneth cafeteria. The class on consumer education includes teaching students about getting a job, personal hygiene, etc. Six students were placed at outside job sites; five of these students (19 percent) were successfully maintained during the whole year. The efforts of the work-study coordinator were reported as most helpful.

Facility

The SED program for intermediate and high school students was housed during the 1980-81 school year at Kenneth Avenue School, which was termed the "Young Adult Center." (This facility also housed the "Maple Hall" program for severely handicapped adults.) At this facility the SED program used four classrooms, a counselling room, an isolation room, office, and shared the multipurpose room.

The opportunities which this facility provided were reported by staff to be the following:

- Physical space -- lots of room for movement on campus.
- Four full classrooms and space available besides these four rooms for counselling, "time out", and an office.
- The multipurpose room was useful as a gym as well as for lunch and other purposes.
- The kitchen and cafeteria facility provided an opportunity for students to be cafeteria aides. The good nutritious meals seemed to help student behavior in the afternnon.
- The neighborhood setting provided more safety than locations on major roads.
- The movement from class to class was more like "regular school".
- The Maple Hall program provided students with aide opportunities.

The problems associated with the use of this facility were reported to be the following:

- Time of teacher (up to two hours a day) required to operate cafeteria.
- Need for more variety of teachers and/or classes (subjects).
- Isolation from regular school students.
- Lack of role models.
- No shop opportunities on site.

Staff Supervision/Assistance

It was reported that having a larger staff grouping exerted social pressures on all staff to follow the school plan (there are no "off" days for staff). Staff reported that the help from the ART was a very positive assistance. Staff members said that they worked well together and were concerned about each other.

Several staff members expressed a need for direct help/training to deal with assaultive behaviors of students and to write up reports on such behavior.

Major Concerns of Staff

Expense -- Cost for this SED program, including all staff, was thought to be no greater than at privately-run daytime schools. Students who required residential placement would have even greater costs. Therefore, staff members believed that the program, while relatively expensive, was less expensive than the alternative (i.e., no district SED program).

Staff -- Having adequate staff was considered critical for the successful operation of the SED program. Staff selection required persons who could work successfully with students, program and staff. Program works because sufficient staff are available to allow one-to-one coverage of isolation cases. Because student "rewards" were paid for by staff members, it created a financial penalty for those working in the program, although there were no complaints from staff members.

Integration -- There was a desire on the part of many staff members to facilitate students' access to regular campus programs for integration. Related to this access would be the ability to provide more variety in class offerings and intellectual stimulation for those with higher academic ability, which was lacking at the present site.

Stability -- Consistency of program/site/staff was needed by students. These three factors were all changed during the 1980-81 year, and it required considerable time for students to make adjustments. Destruction of school property was an area of concern for several staff members that seemed to require more appropriate consequences than those established at the present time.

IMPLEMENTATION FINDINGS -- STUDENT DATA

The following student information supplements the interview findings presented above.

Student Enrollment

Except for November and December, enrollment has been at or above 25 students throughout the year. During the last third of the year three students were reported as enrolled in the program, but were not served at the SED site. These students were on special contracts to receive individual counselling, independent study, and to work. Although they were not attending at the Kenneth Avenue school site, their IEP planning and meetings were still done by the SED staff.

A summary of the SED enrollment for 1980-81 is given below.

SED Enrollment Summary

Month	Enrollment Total	Drops	Adds
September	27		
October	25	-4	+2
November	20	-5	
December	21		+1
January	26		+5
February	26	-1	+1
*March	27		+1
*April	25	-2	
*May	26	-1	+2

*Three students enrolled in program on special contract.

Student Attendance

Attendance for students in the SED program was extremely variable. In addition to absenses for illness, other absences were due to family/supervision needs (student going with parent because no one would be home for after-school supervision). Students were also absent due to school or bus suspension. Because of the changing daily attendance patterns no consistent report on attendance was attempted. A review of records on attendance beginning in January (a different attendance system was used prior to that month), provided a way of summarizing attendance in terms of the maximum number of students absent on any one day during each month. This review indicated a peak in absences during February, with a consistently lower peak for the following months. The maximum counts of daily absences for each month are presented below.

Daily Absences, All Causes

Month	Maximum
January	8
February	10
March	7
April	6
May	6

Also related to absences are the suspensions for SED students. After having many suspensions during the first two months of school, there was a sharp drop while the reorganization of the program organization and staff were underway. The increase in December suspensions over those of November reflects the

application of the School Code of Behavior (see Exhibit A). The increase in suspensions during February and March was attributed to tighter application of the school behavior code and to staff turnover. A summary of the suspension report is given below.

SED Suspension Record

Month	Number	Days
September	NA	27
October	NA	25
November	1	1
December	6	9
January	5	7
February	8	11
March	17	28
April	7	12
May	6	10

Student Behavior Levels

Staff members charted the daily and weekly performance of each student in terms of the number of points earned in the behavior management level system. A study of the number of students at each level showed that there was great variability in placements from week to week. A decrease in the number of Level 4 placements was experienced in February and early March (paralleling the rise in suspensions), but this was overcome, possibly by the stimulus of the fishing field trip for higher level achievement at the end of March. The averages from April on show a decrease in Level 1, with increases of seven percent in Levels 3 and 4 over the pattern from January through March. These patterns are shown in Exhibit H.

The graphs for individual students are more meaningful than the summary for the whole program. The exhibits B through G show the following:

Exhibit B	Student who "likes" the one-on-one help in Level 1
Exhibit C	Hysterical personality (manic-depressive)
Exhibit D	Moved from half to full day in SED program
Exhibit E	Change following IEP team meeting
Exhibit F	Student ready to go half-time to regular campus
Exhibit G	Ready for full-time on regular campus

Student Achievement

Of the 26 SED students enrolled in the spring of 1981, 15 (58 percent) had previous scores available and current scores from March or April testing. There were eight students whose most recent scores were from earlier testing dates and three students with only one test administration; neither of these groups were included in the growth analysis.

The average SED student had achievement scores typical of fifth or sixth grade students. The average grade equivalent scores were: reading, 6.8; spelling, 5.7; mathematics, 5.1. These averages, however, do not represent the broad range of achievement, which went from a low of grade one to a high of grade eleven.

Considering the three achievement areas, reading, spelling and mathematics, each student could have three growth or loss scores. One-third (5) of the students had gains in all three areas. Another one-third had a loss in one of the three areas, with the remaining students having losses in two or three areas (4 and 1 student(s), respectively). The average growth found for the total group of students indicated only a very slight growth (about two-tenths of a month growth for each month in program). This lack of growth was considerably influenced by the scores of those students whose growth patterns were negative. When only the "positive" students were studied, growth approximated the average of one month progress for one month in school.

Student Placement

Four students (15 percent) graduated in June, 1981. Current student status shows that next year 15 of the 26 students or 58 percent of those currently enrolled, will be returning full time to regular or continuation schools or be part-time in regular high schools or be in work study. Of this group of 15 students, six entered the SED program during the 1980-81 school year. It appears that intervention for one or more years can be effective in helping students prepare for regular school and/or work.

CONCLUSIONS

What should be maintained in the SED program?

- Organizational structure (points, levels)
- School code of behavior
- Administrator/ART on site
- Full-time counselor
- Staff size
- Consistency in program/staff/site

What should be changed in the SED program?

- Facilitate opportunities for integration
- Encourage more academic growth
- Provide more intensive and extensive class offerings
- Provide appropriate instructional materials and textbooks
- Develop new (non-costly) incentives
- Promote individual behavior contracts
- Eliminate negative class "check" system
- Provide cafeteria support staff

Is the program successful?

- Organizational structure strongly supported by staff
- Evidence of behavioral changes for many students
- Outstanding staff concern and support